1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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around, give a strong thrust with the pole-stick, and the canoe was through—a bit of child's play.

We were soon again to see Sedefo's kunu strike. This time it was almost at dusk. The men, it appeared, would not be able to make the village we had planned on for the night. In half an hour it would be dark, and here we were fully two hours' fast traveling from our intended destination. Overhead clouds were coming up from the east. The sky was rapidly becoming overcast. Rain—and everywhere the impenetrable wall of green, rising dark and forbidding. To make camp where we were would have taken at least two hours, and it was growing darker and darker. The men refused to clear the underbrush in the dark.

It seemed, however, that five minutes upstream on the opposite bank and only a little to the south of where we had stopped to talk things over was a village, the name of which when we heard it we recognized as one of the two we had been asked not to visit. There was nothing to do but to brave the displeasure of the Granman and stop there; so turning we headed our boats toward the opposite shore.

In midstream a great wind came up, a wind that in suddenness and force is only met in the tropics. The men shrieked and shouted and struggled until our boats reached shore. But Sedefo's boat, which was the second, seemed to be lifted bodily out of the water. We could see a black mass being heaved up . . . the black tarpaulin was overboard going downstream, and Sedefo after it.

The wind subsided as quickly as it had sprung up, and when Sedefo came back sometime later, he carried the dripping tarpaulin on his head. He did not drink the rum we gave to warm him, but poured it over his hands and his boat as an offering.

The next day we talked with Bayo about kunu.

"Why is it, Bayo, that Sedefo lost his food in the still water? Was it because he felt safe and didn't take care in such small rapids?"

"No," he said promptly, "that's how kunu works. A man travels on the river all his life. He goes over small

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the uncleared bush, or the sight of a snake twined about a liana, no longer struck terror, and the flaying rains which came down so suddenly, and as suddenly were over, no longer even aroused uneasiness.

At the prow of our boat Bayo poled vigorously and continued his countless variants of the seketi song we had been hearing everywhere on the river, while Bibifo had made a refrain of our question, "How do you say this in your Saramacca language?" He would paddle in silence for a long time, only to begin muttering at the most unexpected moments, "Sa'macca tongo!" in the way of an old man who talks to himself. He would then repeat it over and over in ridicule of us, and sometimes in a singsong voice he would improvise lines about the white man who wanted to know how everything was called in the true, true Saramacca language, and how all that was told him he wrote down in a book.

"Great-grandfather," we would say to him, "why do you say this? Isn't it all right for us to want to learn how to talk to the G'aman?"

"*Kere-kere*—It's all right."

But having said this, he would engage Bayo in conversation, clipping his words, and using so much idiom and parable as utterly to confound us.

"Your language is difficult, great-grandfather."

"Ya-hai, it is meant for the people of the bush, white man," he would say with a pride we had not looked for from the mild Bibifo, who was now called Adrian. There was, it appeared, potency in the "word," and magic. The names for things, and the things themselves were one. The knowledge of Saramacca names belonged to the Saramacca people, and whether as Bibifo or Adrian, he was above all a Saramacca Negro, and a member of an important clan.

2

When we had been seven days on the river, our cook came to us and said he wanted to talk about something we had best know.

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stopped to change their clothes, and make themselves fit for the reception by the Granman.

We had been warned that these preparations were not to be slighted. Those who had been to the village of the Granman told many stories of the impressiveness of the ceremonial life, and the dignity of those who were there. It was the seat of government, the home of a potentate. A visitor, whether a village chief or a man from the city, had to keep in mind that he was to appear at court. Etiquette demanded that the traveler, once arrived at the island which now hid us from the Granman and his assembled villagers, debark, remove the stains of hard traveling, and dress in a manner befitting the reception which awaited him.

But the gods had planned otherwise.

At this time of the year, though the heavy rains were over and the showers were becoming less and less frequent, it did sometimes happen that the clouds gathered at midafternoon and rain fell. To the northeast, behind us, we had seen the clouds massing, and now they hung low and glowering.

"It will rain," Sedefo called to us, just as we were making ready to see to a change of clothes, and an instant later the storm broke. With a kind of hurricane force which sent the branches toward the earth, and flares of lightning and crashes of thunder, the deluge was upon us. Not since our first days in the bush had we coped with a rain like this. The water poured down as though some giant hands were turning over endless vessels. Our tent seemed to have been taken as unaware as we were, for having sheltered us in many hard storms, it was now inadequate to keep out the downpour. We drew our raincoats tighter about us to keep off the water which came through the thatch.

Under the trees of the island the Bush Negroes were huddled. Their favorite top cloths were still in their baskets, safe out of the wet under the white man's tarpaulins. No chance now to put them on, or to use the oil which they had jealously saved for making their faces and

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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562 the river—the glinting light on the black skins, shining with sweat and spray, and the veined muscles that roll and subside as the dripping pole goes down, first one end and then the other, into the yellow water. Hour after hour they strain their bodies against the bending poles. Without warning a
● [132] heavy tropical downpour will blanket the river with sheets of rain, but the *corials* (canoes) go on. When the rain stops the hot sun quickly dries the black skins.

137 All along the river the foliage towers upward from the
502 water's edge. Great trees rear high their masses of limbs and verdure. Going upstream the boatmen stay close to the bank, for there the current, checked by myriads of roots, is not so swift. Often the men can reach out of the corial and touch the foliage. In sharp contrast with this green is the brown colour of the muddy stream. The sunlight glares on the surface, except where the overhanging wall of trees throws a shade upon the water. The black boatmen blend in with the yellow river, the green foliage, and the metallic sky.

136 Parrots scream overhead. A pair of scarlet macaws cackle at each other. Leaping fish shimmer in the sunlight, falling back into the river with a white splash. Bats from underneath logs, disturbed by human intrusion, disappear into the bank a hundred feet ahead. The corials are eyed intently by parakeets feeding high up in the air, perched on tree limbs along the bank. Little black and white swallow-like skimmers scurry over the water just forward of the bow, which keeps pushing on through the white riffles. Huge water-fowl flap their wide wings and sail gracefully away.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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[H12
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Chapter Four

THE DANCE

SUNDOWN on the Surinam. Women with breasts like dried tobacco leaves stew hunks of red baboon over the Djuka fires. The old dance gods will stir tonight. Mist is drifting up from the river and blowing between the trees. Colours fade out as darkness falls. The atmosphere of the jungle closes in on us with the night. 252 262 132

As night falls a Bush Negro corial appears on the river. It is followed by four others, all loaded with people from another village three miles downstream. The strangers have come to dance for the bahkra. We have promised them candy and high wine. The women tie bands of nuts about their limbs; the dried nuts rattle. 574 534

They bring the drums, the soul of the jungle. The big tom-tom, elaborately carved on the outside, is the *apenti*, or signal drum. The smaller *nanda* and the baby *baboula* (an African

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1 [For caption, see category 116, p. 204 - Analyst]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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224 hardly more than shadows. We find the man unharmed,
648 excited and voluble. He encountered a puma, a large one. He fired at close range and wounded it. We see a track of blood, and instantly set out to follow it. It is too dark now; we are forced to retreat back to camp, blazing the trees along the route to find the trail in the morning.

[342] At camp the Djukas erect four uprights and a roof of palm frond, as a shield from the rain and heavy dew. Another is rigged for their own use, and the hammocks are slung underneath. Again they sit up around the campfire and tell loud stories, the same ones, probably.

000 Sitting by the campfire in the pathless interior, thinking of the hundreds of desperate and difficult miles of surrounding jungle, blue by day and black by night, in the company of a few Negroes without whom it would be impossible to return, it is difficult for anyone to escape a feeling of weakness and insignificance. One scoffs at the black man's superstitions, his amulets and guardian spirits, but in the bush at night one senses the overpowering magnitude of the fierce wilderness, one begins to understand his need for such things as a protection against the psychological powers of the darkness. We realize, of course, that there is little in the bush capable of hurting anyone, save some big cats and a few rare snakes. But, as a sceptic has said, it is not reason which governs men.

● 132 Late that night forked lightning lit up the eerie passages of the jungle. The corridors of trees were filled with wind. The branches, whipped furiously by the great volume of fast

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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moving air, roared like an open steam valve. We are rudely awakened by Daniels, who shakes our hammock violently. He shouts over the uproar; everyone must leave the huts at once. A giant tree close to the windward is about to fall and might crush the huts while we sleep.

We quickly abandon the hut and are immediately drenched. Imagine such disconsolate men, staring at the moving wilderness of leaves damning all trees and all weather that takes them out of their hammocks at two o'clock in the morning, and almost reconciled to the idea of being crushed in comfortable hammocks in preference to standing out in the open, expecting a tree to fall on them anyway. But in a short time the storm subsides sufficiently to allow us to return.

The next morning we break camp and trek another day back into the interior. There are no camps now, no huts of any kind, no men. Only the high bush. We make an early start to look for the puma that escaped the night before. There is a bloody bed of sheltered leaves where the puma rested, but the rest of the path is obliterated by the storm.

We turn and begin the trek back.

A curious custom widely prevalent among the Bush Negroes is that called *Dressy Dahgo*, or dressing the dog, in

/12 cont./

796 Then they call all the neighbors together to take part in the
273 festivities to be held, which consist of invoking their gods amidst continuous dancing and excessive drinking.

They begin the festivities only on a Friday and usually finish on a Sunday or Monday, depending on the larger or smaller
[147] supply of drink, so, lacking this, the festival ends. After the conclusion they are usually extremely tired and listless and give themselves up entirely to rest for at least two or three days.

It is a definite requirement at these festivities to be very amply supplied with strong drink, because one must drink without
[782] interruption in order to remain in a continuous narcosis. With each drink they first pour a little on the ground, -- so that it, too, on which they find themselves so gay, may participate in their enjoyment.

[262] The merrymakers then take care that they will by no means
[577] be lacking in fish, wild game, bacon, rice, etc., since it is a matter of honor with them to display the most lavish hospitality on such occasions.

776 The gods that they worship are:

Loango Gado,
Papa Gado,
Cromantie Gado,

/13/ names certainly derived from the various African tribes of these names.

In the first two they glorify nature and everything created, from which it therefore appears that these are merely subordinate
[787] gods of the unnamed, single great spirit. The last is above all regarded by them as the mediator who transmits their wishes to the great spirit; he is invoked especially at burial ceremonies and for consultation in connection with serious illnesses.

796 They do not have any other cult or religion, so far as I was
[771] able to discover, but only the fixed habit of still celebrating to-
[132] gether and with their chief and captains on the first Friday of the new moon in the month of October or November, after the long
[783] dry period has set in for good, a great feast that has as its goal a general atonement, to cleanse them of the misdeeds that they have committed.

/136/

121 The agriculture of the Bush Negroes, however, has become
[241] a matter which urgently demands the attention of the administration as a result of the wasteful use of land. Until now little attention has been paid to this, but if one wants to develop the interior of Surinam, this problem will also have to be looked into.

101 The data provided here throw light upon the agriculture of
121 the Paramaccaners and the Aucaners on the Marowijne and the
[103] Tapanahoni. They were gathered during the above-mentioned medical expedition and during a trip to the Tapanahoni in October, 1952. The facts thus refer primarily to the Marowijne, but in general they are certainly also valid for the other rivers along
121 which the Bush Negroes live. It is a typically Surinam problem,
648 connected with the circumstance that the Bush Negroes have worked in the deep interior in the same fashion for hundreds of years, independent of the life in the civilized coastal region and almost completely outside the sphere of interest of the government.

2. The Grounds System

241 For the planting of agricultural crops the Bush Negro lays out little so-called food grounds. One is to understand by this cleared pieces of ground in the virgin forest on which the crops
[311] are cultivated. The grounds lie along the rivers on higher flat lands, mostly terraces that are not submerged during high water or, in the absence of such terrain, on the slopes of hills. They are more or less circular and have a surface area of a half to one and a half hectares.

241 During the long dry season (October, November) the men
221 clear the grounds. Two to three weeks thereafter the forest that
● 132 has been felled is burned; the smaller branches are cleared away,
462 but the trunks are left lying. The ground is not worked. As soon as the rains of the short rainy season begin, they start to plant and sow. This planting time falls in December and January. The wives of the Bush Negroes (for only the women do the further work) now plant all kinds of crops at the same time on one and the same ground.

/145 cont./

243 Rice (alésie).

Next to cassava rice is an important auxiliary crop. One sows the rice broadcast with the hand among the other crops and tjaps (6) the seed under lightly. The sowing time falls in Decem-

6. To tjap = to loosen the ground with a hoe.

ber to February or March. In the fourth month the rice is mature.
●[132] The harvest time therefore falls in the long rainy season from May to July (somewhat later on the Surinam River). Only the ears are cut off, and these are dried in the sun on the grounds or in the villages. Only dry-land rice is cultivated but in many varieties, such as:

kasiwini, the best kind, with long white grains;
ajengena, with short fine grains, with pounding produces a beautiful white rice;
abalahede, with flat, round grain;
witti-alesie or paramakka-alesie, slightly colored in the ear;
lebi (redi) -- alesie, yellow as paddy, grows also in swampy places;
aloeloe or loeloe, sends out shoots quickly, has a good grain;
pindé-alesie, grain speckled on the outside;
asinkini, variety with long grain, is often planted.

/146/ Still other varieties are: rexora, saka, mabosoe, mooidà, sika-sirie, bakaté-saka, dendelei, mooimasra, wittifang, skati, blakatère, mesiti, pikienloeloe, trampoeloekoe.

[251] The Bush Negroes store the rice in the ears and thresh the paddy with the feet by treading on it after it has been dried on
252 zinc sheets or on sacks. The paddy is pounded in the matta whenever it is needed for a meal. Unpolished silver-pellicle rice /zilvervlies-rijst/ is thus eaten, and this is boiled in the usual
262 manner together with meat or fish. With a good harvest one has rice throughout the year until the following harvest, but frequently
[439] the quantity is sufficient for only a few months. In case of a shortage milled rice is purchased from the shops along the Marowijne.

R /511 cont./
161 The Oayana of the Upper Maroni in 1958 numbered about 240,
175 of whom 70 were on the Surinam side. About 250 others lived on the
[162] Yari and the Parou in Brazil, altogether some 500 persons. They numbered about 3,000 at the time of Leblond (1788), and the explorer Coudreau around 1890 estimated them again at 1,500. All the authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have noticed
R their further decline, but without understanding the cause.
361 The Oayana move their villages every ten years on the aver-
433 age. No cult of the ancestors binds them to their land; they are
R only concerned about a favorable place for agriculture and fishing.
621 As far as can be judged, a village used to group together the
613 members of a matrilineage. There were two types of marriage,
582 one endogamous; between cross cousins in the classificatory sense,
591 the other exogamous; in this latter case, the man would leave his group to establish himself among the relatives of his wife;
R nowadays this principle of residence is breached by individualism.
621 Marriage and residence are entirely free. The composition of the
571 villages changes constantly; a simple dispute suffices to cause the
R departure of a faction which goes to join the neighboring village.
178 Nevertheless the social and political decadence have not had any catastrophic influence on the way of life. The Oayana remain
R firmly attached to their beliefs, their language, and their techniques.
241 The Oayana are above all agriculturalists; their very large
262 clearings are cultivated with great care and provide for them the essentials of their diet.
R After agriculture, fishing is their principal resource. Hunting
433 and gathering come next.
R All this activity leaves plenty of free time for finery, dancing,
517 and, above all, doing nothing in their hammocks.

B /512/
A Geographic environment; way of life; diet. The Upper Maroni pre-
● 132 sents the characteristics of the humid equatorial environment. Lo-
[131] cated at 3°30' latitude, the country has an annual mean temperature of about 26°. The annual rainfall is about three meters, as against 3.5 meters at Cayenne.

/5 cont./

133 This extreme fragmentation of the relief must be remembered
182 as one of the ecological factors influencing the human peopling most directly; it renders the transport of heavy loads impracticable, the establishing of roads practically impossible. Men are led to
[361] settle along the rivers, which constitute the only routes of penetration toward the interior of the country.

133 All the important rivers flow into an alluvial valley whose
132 width varies from some tens of meters to a kilometer, dry during the greater part /6/ of the year, but flooded under several meters
134 of water during the great rains of May-June. This annual inunda-
241 tion makes the alluvial lands unfit for agriculture; the inhabitants of Guiana cultivate only sloping lands and even very steep slopes readily; for good drainage of the soil is indispensable for the raising of manioc whose tubers, which remain in the ground for more than a year, are threatened with rotting.

311 The cultivable zone is in fact closely limited around each village. Practically, it is limited to a strip of 1,500 to 2,000 meters along the banks of each watercourse accessible to pirogues.
[482] Transport of manioc tubers, carried on by the women several
[462] times a month, becomes impracticable if the distance to be covered with loads is greater than two kilometers at the maximum (1).

[101] [131] [184]

1. The Djuka, very numerous on the Tapanahoni, cultivate as far as three or four kilometers from the river; but in general, the Refugee Blacks prefer to build farming habitations at a distance of several days' by boat from their village when this gives them the possibility of farming in the neighborhood of the banks.

/7 cont./

●132 [513] The climate is relatively temperate and easy for the European to stand. In the forest the thermometer does not rise to more than 28° during the hot hours, to go back down to 20° at the end of the night: everyone sleeps with a blanket, Refugee Blacks and Creoles as well as Europeans. Humidity is very great during nearly all the year; precipitation averages three meters a year or about 50 centimeters less than at Cayenne. The year is divided into two seasons: "summer" from July to December, and the rainy season the rest of the year, with a maximum of precipitation in May and June. The water level varies considerably in the course of the year (several meters). The populations of the interior, spaced out along the rivers, suit the rhythm of their lives to the height of the water; the water rules transportation, fishing, and crops; moreover, a certain number of illnesses are in close relation to the rains, in particular those which have an insect for vector.

133 182 [361] [164]

241 [134] Almost everywhere the soil is very poor in organic matter and fundamental ingredients, very waterlogged necessitating the practice of an itinerant agriculture on burned-over areas; the period of fallow ground varies from two to ten years, the optimum seeming to be about six. [136] The inhabitants of Guiana cannot allow ground to lie fallow regularly because of the ravages of the manioc ant, /8/ which is active especially in habitually cultivated zones. [134] Vain and costly efforts made by Europeans notably at Saint-Jean du Maroni about 1950, have shown that the fertility of lands not burned over is practically nil. [242] The Indians and the Refugee Blacks consider that the fertility of the soil depends exclusively on the weight of cinders laid down during the burning.

When burned-over areas are cultivated, only one harvest is obtained; but this harvest is abundant, and the soil thus utilized can be regarded as relatively fertile. The knocking down and burning do not require great labor, so that primitive agricultural methods can be considered to give a good yield. As a matter of fact, the diverse populations of Guiana, Creoles and Refugee Blacks, have entirely adopted the methods of work resulting from the millennial

241 199